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| OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP | | | |
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| COMMENT | FILE | RETURN | |
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| Remarks: | | | |
| Attached is the memo on the aftermath of Carrero's death that we promised over the phone. It was prepared by  | | | |
| | | DATE | |
| | | 20 Dec | |
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FORM NO. 237 Use previous editions
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(40)

OCI-1022-73
20 December 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Carrero's Death

Prime Minister Carrero's death this morning eliminates one-half of the dual succession that Franco had arranged to replace him. Carrero was to carry on as the head of government and Prince Juan Carlos, appointed king-designate in 1969, is slated to become chief of state after Franco dies or becomes incapacitated.

The Constitution provides that Carrero will be replaced temporarily by Vice Premier Fernandez Miranda. The law requires Franco to appoint a new premier within ten days from three candidates proposed by the Council of the Realm, an advisory body composed of Spanish dignitaries from various walks of life.

In practice, Franco's wishes undoubtedly are incorporated into the choices the Council of the Realm makes. If they were not he probably would ignore the legal procedures and simply appoint his own man. Fernandez Miranda will automatically be considered a likely replacement of Carrero. His conservative credentials and political philosophy make him a "safe" candidate and his elevation last June to deputy premier is a solid indication that he is in Franco's favor.

Fernandez Miranda also is the Secretary General of the National Movement, an umbrella organization that Franco uses to contain all legal political expression in Spain. His capacity for "flexibility" has served him well in this job but it could

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also block his appointment as premier. In effect, Fernandez Miranda may be too much of a "politician" for Franco to accept as his replacement at the helm of government.

If today's incident develops into widespread terrorist activity, Franco might be inclined to turn to the military for the next premier. Under these circumstances, General Diaz-Alegria, current chief of staff, would be a likely candidate. He is a favorite among the military and he is notable for his pan-European outlook. He also is reputed to favor gradual movement towards a freer society after Franco's departure, a factor that might make him too moderate in Franco's judgment.

It is also possible that Franco may be so shaken by the death of his most trusted colleague that he might consider resuming the role of premier that he turned over to Carrero last June. Carrero had already been running the day-to-day business of the government since 1967, but Franco's decision to give up some of his power was notable because it marked the first time he had released any authority since he assumed control of Spain in 1936. Franco will have difficulty finding someone else in whom he can place that much confidence.

The first official government communique on Carrero's death claimed the origin of the explosion was unknown. One government official was quoted as saying it was an accident caused by a gas main leak. Late wire service accounts now report that a government spokesman has attributed the blast to a bomb.

Carrero attended Mass daily and the incident occurred as his car was taking him from church. His steady routine would have made the planning for a terrorist act relatively simple. The timing of the incident--approximately an hour before the opening of the trial of ten leftist labor leaders--suggests that Carrero's death was caused by dissident extremists. The blast occurred about half a mile from the court where the trial was to take place. 25X1

Whether Carrero's death was accidental or a planned assassination the regime's immediate reaction will be the same. A tight security cloak has been thrown over the country. All police have been called from holiday leave and the security service has launched a country-wide dragnet to pick up extremists of all political persuasions.

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[redacted] the trial of the "Carabanchel Ten" opened as scheduled but was quickly suspended. It is not yet clear whether it will resume tomorrow or if it has been postponed indefinitely, although recent press releases indicate it resumed this afternoon.

The ten defendants have been imprisoned since June 1972 when they were arrested while conducting a "summit meeting" at a monastery in Madrid. Most of the prisoners are prominent members of, or have close association with, the illegal Spanish Communist Party. All of them--including a Roman Catholic priest--are associated with the clandestine Communist-dominated Workers' Commissions which is also banned in Spain.

They have been charged with illicit association with and leadership of an illegal group. The regime's request for unusually stiff penalties ranging from 12 to 20 years has aroused strong anti-government sentiment within Spain and abroad. The defense claims that what is really at issue is the internationally-recognized right to free trade unions and free assembly.

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